

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 26-39 are presented for consideration in lieu of claims 1-25, which have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 26, 34, 38 and 39 are independent. Support for these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that, in the Office Action dated June 2, 2003, the Examiner indicated that claim 9 contained allowable subject matter. Prior claim 9 recited, among other features, a laser interferometer. To expedite prosecution, Applicant now presents independent claims 26 and 34, which recite, among other features, a laser interferometer. Further, newly presented independent claim 38 is directed to a device manufacturing method and has been patterned after newly presented independent claim 26. Applicant submits, therefore, that independent claims 26, 34 and 38, as presented, should be deemed allowable over the cited art.

In addition to those independent claims being allowable, Applicant submits that independent claim 39 patentably defines features of the subject invention. Notably, this claim is directed to an exposure apparatus that includes, among other features, a second space in which at least one of a light source and a light receiving element of a detection system is filled with a predetermined ambience different from an atmospheric state. This claim is directed to the second embodiment of the subject application, which is shown in Figure 3 of the drawings. Applicant submits that the cited art does not teach or suggest such features of the present invention.

Applicant submits, therefore, that this new independent claim likewise should be deemed allowable over the cited art.

For the reasons noted above, Applicant submits that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 26, 34, 38 and 39, is patentably defined over the cited art.

Dependent claims 27-33 and 35-37 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Further individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits, therefore, that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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